

Message Text

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53

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EB-11 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

USIA-15 COME-00 DRC-01 /104 W

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R 171014Z DEC 73

FM AMEMBASSY MANILA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9832

INFO CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L MANILA 13989

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, RP

SUBJECT: LOPEZ RADIO/TELEVISION EXECUTIVES ARRESTED

SUMMARY: ARREST OF THREE MIDDLE-AGED EXECUTIVES, INCLUDING SON OF FORMER SENATOR TANADA, FOR DISTRIBUTING ANTI-MARCOS PROPAGANDA HAS BEEN ANNOUNCED BY GOP. PUBLICITY APPEARS INTENDED TO DISCOURAGE SIMILAR OPPOSITION ACTIVITIES BY OTHERS AND, BY TIMING ANNOUNCEMENT OF ARRESTS TO SPECTACULAR MANILA OIL FIRE IN WHICH SABOTAGE IS RUMORED, ENCOURAGES PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR MARCOS AS DEC 30 APPROACHES. END SUMMARY.

1. QEEKEND PRESS REPORTS ARREST ON DEC 10 OF THREE EXECUTIVES OF ABS/CBN, THE RADIO-TELEVISION NETWORK OWNED BY EUGENIO LOPEZ FAMILAY. MARCOS FAMILY HAS BEEN NEGOTIATING TO PURCHASE NETWORK, WHICH HAS BEEN CLOSED SINCE BEGINNING OF MARTIAL LAW. ARRESTED WERE AUGUSTO ALMEDA LOPEZ (NO RELATION OF VICE PRESIDENT), ABS/CBN GENERAL MANAGER; GEORGE GADDI, HEAD OF CHANNEL 2; AND LORENZO TANADA, JR., TELEVISION NEWS DIRECTOR AND SON OF FORMER SENATOR TANADA.

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2. ACCORDING PRESS ACCOUNTS, THE THREE, WHO ARE IN

THEIR FORTIES, WERE ARRESTED IN ACTO OF DISTRIBUTING "SUBVERSIVE PROPAGANDA MATERIALS" IN MANILA. THIRTY-SEVEN PACKETS OF LEAFLETS WERE FOUND IN THEIR POSSESSION, AND THEY REPORTEDLY ADMITTED HAVING DISTRIBUTED ANOTHER 70. WHILE MOST NEWSPAPERS TREATED STORY AS SEPARATE PIECE, SUNDAY EXPRESS MERGED IT INTO ARTICLE REPORTING GOVERNMENT INVESTIGATION OF POSSIBLE SABOTAGE IN DEC 14 FUEL OIL FIRE.

3. FIRE WAS SPECTACULAR BLAZE AT MERALCO'S ROCKVILLE SUBSTATION IN SUBURBAN MAKATI WHICH ATTRACTED ATTENTION AND CONCERN OF ENTIRE METROPOLITAN AREA. IT CONSUMED MORE THAN ONE THOUSAND TONS OF BUNKER TYPE FUEL OIL, CAUSED AT LEAST THREE DEATHS, MORE THAN FORTY INJURIES AND ABOUT \$2 MILLION IN DAMAGES. FOR A WHILE, IT THREATENED PROSPEROUS SUBURB OF BEL-AIR, MANY OF WHOSE RESIDENTS EVACUATED THEIR HOMES AND BELONGINGS. GOP IS PURSUING INVESTIGATION INTO CAUSES OF FIRE WITH HIGHEST LEVEL INTEREST. AT PRESENT NO EVIDENCE OF SABOTAGE IS KNOWN TO EMBASSY, BUT OFFICIAL GOP OSURCES ALLUDE TO POSSIBLE COMMUNIST INVOLVEMENT. WHETHER ACCIDENTAL OR NOT, HOWEVER, IT IS WIDELY BELIEVED IN MANILA THAT FIRE WAS CAUSED BY SABOTAGE AND GOVT PRESS TREATMENT ENCOURAGES THIS BELIEF.

4. EMBASSY UNDERSTANDS FROM GOP SOURCES THAT THREE WERE DISTRIBUTING COPIES OF LATEST LETTER OF FILIPINO FREEDOM FIGHTERS (FFF) WHICH CRITICIZES CORRUPTION OF MARCOS REGIME AND CALLS FOR MARCOS TO STEP DOWN ON DEC 30 IN FAVOR OF A PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT. EIGHTY THOUSAND COPIES OF LETTER WERE REPORTEDLY PREPARED, AND MANY ARE NOW CIRCULATING IN MANILA.

5. COMMENT: PHILIPPINE PUBLIC RARELY BECOMES AWARE OF POLITICAL ARRESTS UNTIL RELEASE OF DETAINED INDIVIDUAL IS ANNOUNCED IN PRESS. ANNOUNCEMENT AT THIS TIME OF ARREST OF LOPEZ ET AL APPEARS INTENDED TO HAVE SEVERAL EFFECTS. FIRST, IT WARNS MACOS CRITICS OF POTENTIAL DANGER OF SUPPORTING FLOURISHING UNDERGROUND PRESS AND LEAFLET ACTIVITIES. SECONDLY, DETENTION OF SON OF SENATOR TANADA, WHO HAS BECOME AN IRRITANT TO MARCOS THROUGH HIS ANTI-MARTIAL LAW PETITIONS TO SUPREME COURT, MAY BE

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DESIGNED TO DISSUADE TANADA AND OTHERS FROM FILING PETIONS AFTER DEC 30 CHALLENGING MARCOS' LEGITIMACY. TACTIC OF HOLDING CLOSE RELATIVES OF KEY OPPONENT AS HOSTAGES HAS BEEN USED BY MARCOS WITH CONSIDERABLE SUCCESS BEFORE (E.G. EUGENIO LOPEZ, JR. AND SERGIO OSMENA III). THIRDLY, BY PUBLICLY LINKING ARRESTS TO ALLEGED SABOTAGE IN OIL FIRE, GOP APPEARS TO BE ENCOURAGING BELIEF THAT SOME INDIVIDUALS ARE ATTEMPTING TO UNDERMINE GOVT AND THAT MARCOS IS CAPABLE

OF DEALING WITH THEM AS DEC 30 APPROACHES.
SULLIVAN

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Message Attributes

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Errors: N/A
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